

SECTION III

The Responsibilities of School Counselors And Other Staff Members

Counselors' Orientation

Professional school counselors accept the responsibility to help all students through a systematically delivered developmental guidance and counseling program. At the same time, they respect each student, strive to understand each student's background and the factors which are influencing his/her present circumstances, and maintain optimism about each student's future.

Professional school counselors approach students, parents, teachers, and others with warmth and understanding, an accepting and optimistic attitude about the potentialities of people, and the belief that people can change in positive ways. They are committed to personal change and growth, not only in others, but also in themselves. They have the ability to relate to and effectively communicate with people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. When counselors are selected who demonstrate these personal characteristics and the competencies described and reflect the ethnic makeup of the school community, the probability for having an effective guidance and counseling program is increased.

Counselors' Background and Training

Professional school counselors were teachers first. Thus, they have demonstrated competence as instructors and understand the dynamics of the classroom and the school setting. This initial experience provides the background for their understanding of school-related situations and problems and an understanding of the opportunities available in the school system.

Through coursework leading them to school counselor certification and, typically, the master's degree, professional educators learn and apply, through practicum and research experiences, knowledge and skills regarding the guidance program, pupils served, and counseling and development services. Specifically, they study:

- history, legal and ethical issues,
- processes for implementing a developmental guidance program,
- normal growth and development of children and youth,
- cross-cultural foundations,
- motivation and learning in the exceptional child,
- counseling theory and methods,
- group procedures,
- consultation,
- student appraisal,
- career development,
- counseling special populations,
- societal and environmental factors affecting learners, and
- coordination of resources.

Professional school counselors are committed to continuous professional growth and development; therefore, they develop annual professional growth plans. School districts have a responsibility to provide in-service training for school counselors and to support counselors' participation in other professional development activities.

Counselors' Responsibilities

When a fully certified school counselor is employed, the administration, faculty, parents, and community should expect the counselor to carry out eight basic responsibilities competently and in a professional and accountable manner. The eight responsibilities are:

- Program Management
- Guidance
- Counseling
- Consultation
- Coordination
- Student Assessment
- Professional Behavior
- Professional Standards

Responsibility Domains

The following eight domains constitute the responsibilities of the professional school counselor. These domains form the basis of the Performance Evaluation Form that is included in the TEMPSC-II.

Program Management Domain - Counselors collaboratively plan, implement, evaluate and advocate for a comprehensive, developmental guidance program that includes the four components (1) Guidance Curriculum, (2) Responsive Services, (3) Individual Planning, and (4) System Support specified in the Texas Education Code (§33.005). Counselors collaborate with others to determine the relevant balance among the four components to meet student and community needs. Program management requires organizing personnel, physical resources, and activities in relation to defined needs, priorities, and objectives in order to maintain the program's contribution to the total educational program. Counselors use program management competencies in the System Support component of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

Guidance Domain - In providing guidance, counselors proactively assist all students to develop and apply skills for maximum educational, career, personal, and social growth during school years and beyond. Counselors use guidance competencies to provide developmentally appropriate activities through the Guidance Curriculum and Individual Planning components of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

Counseling Domain - Counseling is an intervention made available to all students and applying to those whose developmental needs, personal concerns, or problems affect their continued educational, career, personal or social development. Counselors use counseling competencies in the Responsive Services component of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

Consultation Domain - Counselors, functioning as consultants, advocate for students and provide professional expertise to help faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and other community members understand individual behavior and human relationships. Counselors interpret relevant information to these persons concerning the development and needs of students. The counselor consults with others to increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success. Counselors may use consultation competencies in any of the four components of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

Coordination Domain - Counselors as coordinators bring together people and resources in the home, school, district, and community to support students' optimal academic, career, personal, and social development. Working with students' parents or guardians, and/or school personnel, counselors coordinate referrals to other resources as appropriate. Counselors may apply coordination competencies in any of the four components of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

Student Assessment Domain - In student assessment, counselors interpret standardized test results and other available student data to promote sound decision making among students and others involved in students' development. Counselors also promote understanding of ethical and legal uses and limitations of assessment. Counselors apply student assessment competencies in the Individual Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support components of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

Professional Behavior Domain - Professional school counselors accept responsibility for self-directed professional development through continuous efforts to improve their competence in meeting and exceeding standards in performing their jobs. Professional behavior also entails the expectation that counselors have responsibility to improve the inclusivity of the school environment and to maintain collaborative inter-professional relationships. Professional school counselors demonstrate professional behavior in all components of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program; however, accountability for time dedicated to these activities applies to the System Support component.

Professional Standards Domain - Professional school counselors adhere to professional standards in all components of a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program. Time dedicated to activities that promote understanding and application of professional rules, policies, regulations, and guidelines is accounted for in the System Support component of a comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

Responsibility Domains/Program Components

The competencies used by school counselors to carry out these responsibilities and the developmental guidance and counseling program components which call upon them are listed below.

Responsibility Domains	Program Components
Program Management	System Support
Guidance	Guidance Curriculum Individual Planning
Counseling	Responsive Services
Consultation	Guidance Curriculum Individual Planning Responsive Services System Support
Coordination	Guidance Curriculum Individual Planning Responsive Services
Student Assessment	Individual Planning Responsive Services
Professional Behavior	System Support
Professional Standards	System Support

Counselor Job Description and Performance Evaluation

Job Description - A counselor's job description reflects the specific application of the domains and standards appropriate to his or her job assignment within the local comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program.

It is important to note that counselors' specific job descriptions vary depending on their work setting and the counselor-to-student ratio. Although every school counselor generally has responsibilities in all eight domains, not all domains are necessarily equally balanced for all counselors. Occasionally a standard listed under a domain in the Counselor Job Description and Performance Evaluation Form may not be applicable to a particular counselor. Hence, an individual counselor's specific responsibilities should be defined collaboratively by the counselor and the administrator in response to the school's and districts needs and priorities. The school counselor is required to be evaluated annually as per Texas Education Code (TEC §21.352 & 21.356).

**TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY COUNSELOR JOB
DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION
AS CONTAINED IN TEC §§33.002-33.007**

The counselor evaluation form may be used by the counselor as a self-audit. It may also be used by supervisors to annually evaluate the counselor's performance. This TEA Job Description and Performance Evaluation were developed in cooperation with the Texas Counseling Association and Texas School Counselors Association and is the recommended evaluation form as directed by TEC §21.356. The recommended version includes a system for weighting the ratings. Weighting reflects the relative importance of each domain within an individual counselor's job assignment. A weight is assigned to each domain to reflect how much of a counselor's resources are expected to be appropriated to that domain. Rating reflects the evaluator's judgment about the quality of a counselor's performance on a standard. Details about the rating scale and the application of weights are presented later under "Directions for Completion of the Performance Evaluation Form." A district or campus may choose not to use the weighting system. For additional information, contact TEA Guidance and Counseling at (512) 463-9498.

DOMAIN I: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Standard 1:	Plans a balanced comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program that includes Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and System Support components. (Texas Education Code, §33.005)
Standard 2:	Implements a balanced comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program that includes Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and System Support components. (Texas Education Code, §33.005)
Standard 3:	Evaluates and promotes continuous improvement of a balanced comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program that includes Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and System Support components. (Texas Education Code, §33.005)
Standard 4:	Promotes the balanced provision of program content areas (self-confidence development; motivation to achieve; decision-making, goal-setting, planning, and problem-solving skills; interpersonal effectiveness, communication skills, cross-cultural effectiveness; and responsible behavior).
Standard 5:	Manages program personnel and/or other program resources.
Standard 6:	Collaborates with school personnel, students, parents, and the community to plan, implement, evaluate, and promote continuous improvement of a developmental guidance and counseling program. (Texas Education Code, §33.005)
Standard 7:	Advocates the school developmental guidance and counseling program and counselors' ethical and professional standards with school personnel, parents, students, and the community.

DOMAIN II: GUIDANCE

Standard 1:	Plans structured group lessons to deliver the Guidance Curriculum effectively and in accordance with students' developmental needs.
Standard 2:	Conducts structured group lessons to deliver the Guidance Curriculum effectively.
Standard 3:	Involves students, teachers, parents and others to promote effective implementation of the Guidance Curriculum.
Standard 4:	Accurately and without bias guides individuals and groups of students and parents to plan, monitor, and manage the student's own educational development including provision of information regarding post-secondary opportunities. (Texas Education Code, §33.007)
Standard 5:	Accurately and without bias guides individuals and groups of students and parents to plan, monitor, and manage the student's own career development. (Texas Education Code, §33.007)
Standard 6:	Accurately and without bias guides individuals and groups of students and parents to plan, monitor, and manage a student's own personal and social development. (Texas Education Code, §33.006)
Standard 7:	Uses accepted theories and effective techniques of developmental guidance to promote the career, educational, personal, and social development of students.

DOMAIN III: COUNSELING

Standard 1:	Uses accepted theories and effective techniques to provide individual developmental, preventive, remedial, and/or crisis counseling.
Standard 2:	Uses accepted theories and effective techniques to provide group developmental, preventive, remedial, and/or crisis counseling.

DOMAIN IV: CONSULTATION

Standard 1:	Consults with parents, school personnel, and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success. (Texas Education Code, § 33.006)
Standard 2:	Consults with school personnel, parents, and other community members to promote understanding of student development, individual behavior, the student's environment, and human relationships.
Standard 3:	Collaboratively provides professional expertise to advocate for individual students and specific groups of students.

DOMAIN V: COORDINATION

Standard 1:	Coordinates people and other resources in the school, home, and community to promote student success.
Standard 2:	Uses an effective process when referring students, parents, and/or others to special programs and services.

DOMAIN VI: STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Standard 1:	Adheres to legal, ethical, and professional standards related to assessment.
Standard 2:	With the assistance of school personnel, interprets standardized tests results and other assessment data to guide students in individual goal setting and planning.
Standard 3:	Enhances the work of school personnel and parents in guiding student goal setting and planning by promoting understanding of standardized test results and other assessment data.

DOMAIN VII: PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Standard 1:	Demonstrates professionalism, including a commitment to professional development.
Standard 2:	Advocates for a school environment that acknowledges and respects diversity.
Standard 3:	Establishes and maintains professional relationships with administrators, teacher, other school personnel, parents, and community members.

DOMAIN VIII: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Standard 1:	Adheres to legal standards including school board policies.
Standard 2:	Adheres to state, district, and campus standards, regulations, and procedures.
Standard 3:	Is committed to current professional standards of competence and practice. (Texas Administrative Code, Rule §239.25)
Standard 4:	Promotes and follows ethical standards for school counselors.
Standard 5:	Demonstrates professional and responsible work habits.
Standard 6:	Uses professional written and oral communication and interpersonal skills.

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM:

- I. Complete the background information on the first page of the *Performance Evaluation Form***
- II. Assign weights to each domain:** The individual is to be evaluated in light of his/her responsibilities within the overall guidance program. Therefore, weights for each of the domains should be agreed upon by the counselor and the evaluator at the beginning of the evaluation period and recorded on the first page of the *Performance Evaluation Form* (as percentages appropriate to the counselor's responsibilities). This page should be signed at the beginning of the evaluation period to confirm the weights and other information thereon. **A district or campus may choose not to use the weighted system.**
- III. Compute the average (mean) for each domain:** Determine the domain average by adding the ratings of the standards in the domain and then dividing by the number of standards rated. If a standard is not applicable, "NA" is recorded on the form, and a value for that standard is not figured as part of the domain's average. Spaces for comments, strengths, and areas to address are provided on the *Performance Evaluation Form* for each domain. It is not necessary for the evaluator to comment on each standard or domain; however, comments are encouraged for areas where exceptional strength is indicated or for areas that require improvement.
- IV. Calculate the Summary Evaluation Score:** To obtain the overall rating, multiply the domain average for each domain by its pre-determined weight (%) and then add these weighted domain values to arrive at a total of weighted values. Record this total of weighted domain values in the space for the "Summary Evaluation Score" on the last page (Summary Sheet) of the *Performance Evaluation Form*.
- V. Sign the Summary Sheet of the *Performance Evaluation Form*:** Signatures of the evaluator and the counselor are required at the end of the *Performance Evaluation Form* to acknowledge that the evaluation has been discussed with and presented to the counselor. The counselor's signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the evaluator's ratings.

COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM

NAME OF COUNSELOR: _____

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT: _____

EVALUATION PERIOD: _____ through _____
month/day/year month/day/year

YEARS OF COUNSELING EXPERIENCE:

Present counseling position _____	Total in other districts _____
Total in current district _____	Other counseling experience _____

ASSIGNMENT (check applicable): Elementary ____ Middle/Junior High ____ High ____ Post-secondary ____

STUDENT LOAD:

Assignment _____ Number _____

EVALUATOR (name printed): _____ Title _____

WEIGHTS (%) for each domain agreed upon by the counselor and evaluator at the beginning of the evaluation cycle:

_____	Program Management
_____	Guidance
_____	Counseling
_____	Consultation
_____	Coordination
_____	Student Assessment
_____	Professional Behavior
_____	Professional Standards
100	TOTAL

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: This section is to be used by the counselor to update his/her professional file with current professional activities and organizational memberships.

Evaluator signature

date

Counselor signature

date

RATING SCALE FOR EACH STANDARD:

5=Clearly outstanding, 4=Exceeds standard, 3=Meets standard, 2=Below expectation, 1=Unsatisfactory,
NA=Not applicable

DOMAIN I: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Rating

Standard 1:	Plans a balanced comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program that includes Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and System Support components. (Texas Education Code, § 33.005)	
Standard 2:	Implements a balanced comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program that includes Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and System Support components. (Texas Education Code, § 33.005)	
Standard 3:	Evaluates and promotes continuous improvement of a balanced comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program that includes Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and System Support components. (Texas Education Code, § 33.005)	
Standard 4:	Promotes the balanced provision of program content areas (self-confidence development; motivation to achieve; decision-making, goal-setting, planning, and problem-solving skills; interpersonal effectiveness, communication skills, cross-cultural effectiveness; and responsible behavior).	
Standard 5:	Manages program personnel and/or other program resources.	
Standard 6:	Collaborates with school personnel, students, parents, and the community to plan, implement, evaluate, and promote continuous improvement of a developmental guidance and counseling program. (Texas Education Code, § 33.005)	
Standard 7:	Advocates the school developmental guidance and counseling program and counselors' ethical and professional standards with school personnel, parents, students, and the community.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

RATING SCALE FOR EACH STANDARD:

5=Clearly outstanding, 4=Exceeds standard, 3=Meets standard, 2=Below expectation, 1=Unsatisfactory,
NA=Not applicable

DOMAIN II: GUIDANCE**Rating**

Standard 1:	Plans structured group lessons to deliver the Guidance Curriculum effectively and in accordance with students' developmental needs.	
Standard 2:	Conducts structured group lessons to deliver the Guidance Curriculum effectively.	
Standard 3:	Involves students, teachers, parents and others to promote effective implementation of the Guidance Curriculum.	
Standard 4:	Accurately and without bias guides individuals and groups of students and parents to plan, monitor, and manage the student's own educational development including provision of information regarding post-secondary opportunities. (Texas Education Code, § 33.007)	
Standard 5:	Accurately and without bias guides individuals and groups of students and parents to plan, monitor, and manage the student's own career development. (Texas Education Code, § 33.007)	
Standard 6:	Accurately and without bias guides individuals and groups of students and parents to plan, monitor, and manage a student's own personal and social development. (Texas Education Code, § 33.006)	
Standard 7:	Uses accepted theories and effective techniques of developmental guidance to promote the career, educational, personal, and social development of students.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

RATING SCALE FOR EACH STANDARD:

5=Clearly outstanding, 4=Exceeds standard, 3=Meets standard, 2=Below expectation, 1=Unsatisfactory,
NA=Not applicable

DOMAIN III: COUNSELING**Rating**

Standard 1:	Uses accepted theories and effective techniques to provide individual developmental, preventive, remedial, and/or crisis counseling.	
Standard 2:	Uses accepted theories and effective techniques to provide group developmental, preventive, remedial, and/or crisis counseling.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

DOMAIN IV: CONSULTATION**Rating**

Standard 1:	Consults with parents, school personnel, and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success. (Texas Education Code, § 33.006)	
Standard 2:	Consults with school personnel, parents, and other community members to promote understanding of student development, individual behavior, the student's environment, and human relationships.	
Standard 3:	Collaboratively provides professional expertise to advocate for individual students and specific groups of students.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

RATING SCALE FOR EACH STANDARD:

5=Clearly outstanding, 4=Exceeds standard, 3=Meets standard, 2=Below expectation, 1=Unsatisfactory,
NA=Not applicable

DOMAIN V: COORDINATION**Rating**

Standard 1:	Coordinates people and other resources in the school, home, and community to promote student success.	
Standard 2:	Uses an effective process when referring students, parents, and/or others to special programs and services.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

DOMAIN VI: STUDENT ASSESSMENT**Rating**

Standard 1:	Adheres to legal, ethical, and professional standards related to assessment.	
Standard 2:	With the assistance of school personnel, interprets standardized tests results and other assessment data to guide students in individual goal setting and planning.	
Standard 3:	Enhances the work of school personnel and parents in guiding student goal setting and planning by promoting understanding of standardized test results and other assessment data.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

RATING SCALE FOR EACH STANDARD:

5=Clearly outstanding, 4=Exceeds standard, 3=Meets standard, 2=Below expectation, 1=Unsatisfactory,
NA=Not applicable

DOMAIN VII: PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**Rating**

Standard 1:	Demonstrates professionalism, including a commitment to professional development.	
Standard 2:	Advocates for a school environment that acknowledges and respects diversity.	
Standard 3:	Establishes and maintains professional relationships with administrators, teacher, other school personnel, parents, and community members.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

RATING SCALE FOR EACH STANDARD:

5=Clearly outstanding, 4=Exceeds standard, 3=Meets standard, 2=Below expectation, 1=Unsatisfactory, NA=Not applicable

DOMAIN VIII: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**Rating**

Standard 1:	Adheres to legal standards including school board policies.	
Standard 2:	Adheres to state, district, and campus standards, regulations, and procedures.	
Standard 3:	Is committed to current professional standards of competence and practice. (Texas Administrative Code, Rule §239.25)	
Standard 4:	Promotes and follows ethical standards for school counselors.	
Standard 5:	Demonstrates professional and responsible work habits.	
Standard 6:	Uses professional written and oral communication and interpersonal skills.	
TOTAL =		
DOMAIN AVERAGE =		

Comments: _____

Strengths: _____

Areas to Address: _____

Performance Evaluation Form
SUMMARY SHEET

	Average Domain	X	Domain Weight (add to 100%)	=	Weighted Domain Value
Domain 1: Program Management		X	%	=	
Domain 2: Guidance		X	%	=	
Domain 3: Counseling		X	%	=	
Domain 4: Consultation		X	%	=	
Domain 5: Coordination		X	%	=	
Domain 6: Student Assessment		X	%	=	
Domain 7: Professional Behavior		X	%	=	
Domain 8: Professional Standards		X	%	=	

Summary Evaluation Score (Total of Weighted Values)=

A district or campus may choose not to use the weighted system

For this evaluation period, the overall evaluation of this counselor's performance is represented by the Summary Evaluating Rating in the box above. Copy the Summary Evaluation Score to the appropriate blank below:

- _____ 4.5-5.00 = Performance is clearly outstanding
- _____ 3.5-4.49 = Performance consistently exceeds standards
- _____ 2.5-3.49 = Performance consistently meets standards
- _____ 1.5-2.49 = Performance is below expectations; consultation is required, and improvement is needed in specified areas
- _____ 1.0-1.49 = Performance is unsatisfactory, and little or no improvement has resulted from consultation

Evaluator signature	Title	Date
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I have discussed this evaluation with the evaluator and have received a copy. If I do not agree with this evaluation, I understand that I may submit a letter in duplicate stating my position. A copy is to be retained by the evaluator and the original is to be placed in my personnel file.

Counselor signature	Date
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Staff Assignments

While the program must be defined and organized to meet the identified needs of students and the established goals of the program, the assignments of the program staff also must be appropriately defined and organized. Although school counselors have the primary responsibility for delivery of the Texas Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program, full program implementation calls for employing a wide range of categories of staff and distinguishing between their roles. Organizing the staffing patterns and defining their organizational relationships are also required.

Staff categories. The personnel resources available to a campus or district guidance program vary with the size of the district and the school/district's commitment to the guidance program. Professional, paraprofessional, and volunteers from the school guidance department, the school staff, and the district and community are used.

Guidance Department:

- Counselors may be assigned to conduct their responsibilities comprehensively (i.e., to fulfill all responsibilities for the counselees in their group assignments). Specialist counselors may be assigned to carry out special program assignments or to serve special student groups. Special program assignments include guidance department leadership, crisis team, and building test coordination. Special group assignments include students in compensatory education, special education, career and technology education, and substance abuse/prevention programs.
- Paraprofessional support personnel are needed to fully implement the Texas Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program and include secretaries, registrars, career center technicians, and scheduling clerks.

School Staff:

- Administrators responsibilities may relate to the guidance program: provision of responsive services to students who are having behavior or other problems; referral of students for counseling; provision of system support to the program and the counseling staff; administration of functions which link to guidance activities (e.g., scheduling, testing program coordination).
- Teachers may perform such guidance functions as the teaching guidance curriculum, advising in the individual planning system, and referring students for counseling.

District staff:

- Guidance department administrators and supervisors lead and assist in developmental guidance and counseling program planning, design, implementation, and evaluation. They provide staff development activities through supervision, evaluation, and in-service training of campus guidance staff. They are responsible for materials and resources.
- Psychological services personnel coordinate and collaborate with counselors to ensure continuity of services for students with special, psychological needs.
- Social Workers and other related mental health specialists augment the guidance program staff. In general, their services are extensions of Responsive Services.

Competence. The responsibilities that various people carry out in comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program implementation must be specifically defined. Responsibilities should be appropriate to the individuals' background, training, and competence; for example, guidance department heads should be trained in supervision of school counselors.

Personnel without school counselor certification should be trained to carry out their responsibilities in the guidance and counseling program, e.g., teachers trained to be advisors, community representatives trained to be school speakers, and parent volunteers trained in tasks and parameters of their jobs. They should also be schooled regarding the needs of students.

Personnel without school counselor certification cannot legally be used in place of certified professional school counselors, but rather to augment the program. All personnel assisting in the delivery of the guidance program should adhere to the ethical and legal standards of the counseling profession. Key standards are those regarding students' and parents' rights and confidentiality.

Staffing patterns. Staff load and/or special program assignments for individual staff members need to be:

- supported by a rationale appropriate to student and community needs, and to campus guidance program goals and objectives;
- appropriate to each counselor's or staff member's program responsibilities;
- appropriate to each counselor's or staff member's training, background, and area of specialization.

Organizational relationships. The guidance department has primary responsibility to implement the Texas Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program the local board of education adopts as policy. Personnel without school counselor certification who are active in the program should be supervised by the professional school counselors.

Within the professional school counseling staff, organizational relationships should be clearly defined. Those counselors with special responsibilities should be clearly identified. The guidance department head should be delegated the authority needed to supervise the counseling and guidance department staff.

Mechanisms which facilitate communications between the various members of the guidance program staff need to be employed; for example, regular staff meetings should be held.

Counselor-to-Student Ratios

The effectiveness of the developmental guidance and counseling program is directly related to the counselor-to-student ratio within the program. The number of counselors needed to staff the program is dependent on the students' and community's needs and on the goals and design of the local program. Conversely, the program should be designed to make optimal use of the personnel available, but it cannot be expected to do more than that. The ratios should be sufficiently low to meet the identified, high priority needs of the students and the school community.

It is clear that the larger the counselor's student load, the less individual attention students receive; the smaller the student load, the more individual attention is allowed for. If the district or campus staff identifies high priority needs of students who require individual or small group attention, the adopted ratio must reflect that. For example, if a high school program deems it necessary to hold individual conferences to facilitate students' individual planning, a ratio of 1:300 might be necessary. The number of students in a counselor's student load who have intensified needs for responsive services dictates lower ratios. Special needs populations include students who are educationally/economically disadvantaged, physically/emotionally disabled or abused, highly mobile, dropout prone, and/or migrant.

Ratio recommendations are wide ranging. The American School Counselor Association recommends a maximum ratio of 1:250. The Texas School Counselor Association, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association have recommended ratios of 1:350. In Section V of this guide, a process for determining legitimate program expectations from a given ratio is provided.

